IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended)An inter-device cooperative control method wherein each of a plurality of devices having a communication function communicates with another device, said inter-device cooperative control method comprising the steps of:

providing each of said plurality of devices with functional information including at least one of information on a function possessed by a device and information on a function to be performed on the device, environmental information on the environment in which the device is located, ~~and~~ status information which indicates the progress of at least one of a process performed by the device and a process performed on the device, and contribution rate information which indicates an amount of contribution a process either performed by or performed on the device adds to attaining a predetermined purpose;

extracting plural devices from said plurality of devices, each device of said plural devices performing a process to determine whether said device is to be linked to others of said plural devices based on said contribution rate information, when said device receives purpose data;

obtaining information on a process to be performed by said plurality of devices or information on a process to be performed on the extracted plural ~~said plurality of~~ devices, this information obtaining step being performed by the extracted plural ~~an arbitrary one of said plurality of~~ devices; and

determining a process to be performed by the extracted plural ~~said plurality of~~ devices or a process to be performed on the extracted plural ~~said plurality of~~ devices

based on said obtained information and said functional information, said environmental information, and said status information, this process determining step being performed by the extracted plural ~~said arbitrary device~~devices,

wherein at least one of the extracted plural ~~said plurality of~~ devices is movable,

wherein said environmental information includes position information indicating a position of a device, and

wherein when said position information is changed based on movement of the at least one movable device, said at least one movable device broadcasts the changed position information to the other devices.

2. (previously presented) The inter-device cooperative control method as claimed in claim 1, wherein a plurality of pieces of information are obtained by said arbitrary device and said plurality of pieces of information include functional information, environmental information, and status information on said plurality of devices.

3. (original) The inter-device cooperative control method as claimed in claim 1, wherein information obtained by said arbitrary device is a request for a process to be performed by said plurality of devices or a process to be performed on said plurality of devices.

Claim 4 (canceled).

5. (previously presented) The inter-device cooperative control method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said position information includes at least one of an absolute position of the device, a relative position of the device to another device, and a distance obtained based on a route which can be used by the device.

6. (previously presented) The inter-device cooperative control method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said plurality of devices operate to perform a predetermined process, said predetermined process including information of changing of conditions of said predetermined process.

7. (currently amended) An inter-device cooperative control system composed of a plurality of devices having a communication function, each of said plurality of devices communicating with another device, said inter-device cooperative control system comprising:

storage means for storing functional information including at least one of information on a function possessed by a device and information on a function to be performed on the device, environmental information on the environment in which the device is located, ~~and~~ status information which indicates the progress of at least one of a process performed by the device and a process performed on the device, and contribution rate information which indicates an amount of contribution a process either performed by or performed on the device adds to attaining a predetermined purpose, said storage means being owned by each of said plurality of devices;

means for extracting plural devices from said plurality of devices, each device of said plural devices performing a process to determine whether said device is to be linked to others of said plural devices based on said contribution rate information, when said device receives purpose data, and obtaining information on a process to be performed by said plurality of devices or information on a process to be performed on the extracted plural ~~said plurality of~~ devices, said obtaining of information being performed by the extracted plural ~~an arbitrary one of said plurality of~~ devices; and

means for determining a process to be performed by the extracted plural ~~said plurality of~~ devices or a process to be performed on the extracted plural ~~said plurality of~~ devices based on information obtained by said arbitrary device and functional information, environmental information, and status information each possessed by the extracted plural ~~said arbitrary device~~devices,

wherein at least one of the extracted plural ~~said plurality of~~ devices is movable,

wherein said environmental information includes position information indicating a position of a device, and

wherein when said position information is changed based on movement of the at least one movable device, said at least one movable device broadcasts the changed position information to the other devices.

8. (previously presented) The inter-device cooperative control system as claimed in claim 7, wherein a plurality of pieces of information are obtained by

said arbitrary device and said plurality of pieces of information include functional information, environmental information, and status information on said plurality of devices.

9. (original) The inter-device cooperative control system as claimed in claim 7, wherein information obtained by said arbitrary device is a request for a process to be performed by said plurality of devices or a process to be performed on said plurality of devices.

Claim 10 (canceled).

11. (previously presented) The inter-device cooperative control system as claimed in claim 7, wherein said position information includes at least one of an absolute position of the device, a relative position of the device to another device, and a distance obtained based on a route which can be used by the device.

12. (previously presented) The inter-device cooperative control system as claimed in claim 7, wherein said plurality of devices operate to perform a predetermined process, said predetermined process including information of changing conditions of said predetermined process.

13. (currently amended)A device employed in an inter-device cooperative control system in which a plurality of devices communicate with one another, said device comprising:

storage means for storing functional information including at least one of information on a function possessed by the device and information on a function to be performed on the device, environmental information on the environment in which the device is located, ~~and~~ status information which indicates the progress of at least one of a process performed by the device and a process performed on the device, and contribution rate information which indicates an amount of contribution a process either performed by or performed on the device adds to attaining a predetermined purpose;

means for extracting plural devices from said plurality of devices, each device of said plural devices performing a process to determine whether said device is to be linked to others of said plural devices based on said contribution rate information, when said device receives purpose data, and obtaining information on a process to be performed by the extracted plural ~~said plurality of~~ devices or information on a process to be performed on the extracted plural ~~said plurality of~~ devices; and

means for determining a process to be performed by the extracted plural ~~said plurality of~~ devices or a process to be performed on the extracted plural ~~said plurality of~~ devices based on information obtained by other devices and functional information, environmental information, and status information each possessed by the device,

wherein at least one of the extracted plural ~~said plurality of~~ devices is movable,

wherein said environmental information includes position information indicating a position of a device, and

wherein when said position information is changed based on movement of the at least one movable device, said at least one movable device broadcasts the changed position information to the other devices.

14. (previously presented) The device as claimed in claim 13, wherein pieces of information are obtained by the device and said plurality of pieces of information include functional information, environmental information, and status information on said plurality of devices.

15. (original) The device as claimed in claim 13, wherein information obtained by said other devices is a request for a process to be performed by said plurality of devices or a process to be performed on said plurality of devices.

Claim 16 (canceled).

17. (previously presented) The device as claimed in claim 13, wherein said position information includes at least one of an absolute position of the device, a relative position of the device to another device, and a distance obtained based on a route which can be used by the device.

18. (previously presented) The device as claimed in claim 13, wherein said plurality of devices operate to perform a predetermined process, said predetermined process including information of changing of conditions of said predetermined process.